

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING December 5, 2017

A special meeting of the Northampton Retirement Board was called to order by Chairperson Karpinski at 4:03 p.m. in City Council Chambers, Municipal Hall, 212 Main Street, Northampton, MA.

Members present were Joyce Karpinski, Shirley LaRose, Michael Lyons and Susan Wright. Also present was Retirement Administrator David Shipka and Administrative Assistant Elsie Vazquez.

New Business

Ms. Karpinski noted that the Board was meeting to interview candidates for the next 5th member Board term. Tom Sullivan was scheduled to be interviewed at 4:00 p.m.. Kathy Foote Newman was scheduled to be interviewed at 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Lyons and Ms. Wright had been tasked with writing interview questions. The following had been prepared:

The Northampton Retirement Board provides oversight and direction through strategic decision making for the City of Northampton Retirement System. Decisions relative to choosing an investment advisor, maintaining the investment policy, hiring and oversight of staff and consultants, determining the actuarial assumptions and making decisions on individual retirement issues. All of these decisions have an impact on the City of Northampton, its budget, its employees and its retirees.

- 1. Retirement systems in Massachusetts are governed by MGL Chapter 32. How would your background and knowledge contribute to the implementation of the policies and procedures governing the Northampton Retirement System?*
- 2. What is your knowledge of investments and investment strategies, which could benefit the operations of the Northampton Retirement System?*
- 3. Decisions made by the Retirement Board have a substantial impact on retirees, active members, Northampton taxpayers and the City of Northampton's budget and long term fiscal outlook. How would you approach the need to balance these various interests?*
- 4. Are you available to attend monthly retirement board meetings which are generally held the last Tuesday or Thursday of each month at 1:30 p.m?*

5. *PERAC, the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission requires all retirement board members to earn educational credits on an ongoing basis. Members must maintain 18 credits over three years and must earn/renew at least 6 credits each year. Some educational requirements are based on-line, however most are in workshop format given throughout the state. Are you familiar with the educational requirements and are you available to attend occasional trainings during the workweek outside of Northampton?*

The following is a brief overview of Mr. Sullivan's responses:

1. He spoke about his 32 years of experience working with investments and pensions, as well as his experience on the Northampton Retirement Board. He also spoke about his experience as a trustee with The Lathrop Home, an assisted living facility.
2. He talked about his familiarity with investments and noted his multiple licenses. He spoke strongly about the need for diversification and stressed his conservative approach to investments.
3. He noted that when making decisions on such matters he looks at potential long term impacts to all parties involved, remarking that his general investment philosophy is that you do not want to outlive your investments.
4. He would be available for monthly meetings.
5. As a member of the Board he is familiar with the educational requirements.

At the conclusion of the interview the Board thanked him for his participation in the 5th member selection process. He thanked the Board for considering him for the position and exited the room.

Ms. Newman arrived at approximately 4:23 p.m.

The following is a brief overview of Ms. Newman's responses:

1. She about spoke how she worked in the financial industry as a personal financial advisor with Ostberg & Associates. She stated that she was familiar with fiduciary matters, pointing to her prior work serving on the Northampton School Committee.
2. She talked about the work she does with retirement planning, noting that she worked on building cash flow modules for individuals.

3. She was cognizant of City budgetary concerns as a Northampton taxpayer. She said she would balance the needs of the City with what is best for individuals.

4. She would be available for monthly meetings.

5. She understood that there are requirements for earning educational credits and that providing the trainings do not interfere with her other work she would be able to attend necessary sessions.

At the conclusion of the interview the Board thanked her for her participation in the 5th member selection process. She thanked the Board for considering her for the position and exited the room.

The Board then discussed the merits of the candidates.

Mr. Lyons started the discussion out by pointing to Mr. Sullivan's nearly nine years of experience on the Retirement Board. He thought Ms. Newman interviewed well but believed Mr. Sullivan's experience was more valuable to the Board than what her background would provide.

Ms. Wright said that she had no issues with Mr. Sullivan but thought change was a good thing and was in favor of the 5th member being a Northampton resident.

Ms. LaRose also thought Ms. Newman did a good job with the interview but did not believe she had the qualifications to replace Mr. Sullivan. In regards to residency, she noted that Mr. Sullivan had grown up in Northampton and was still connected to the community.

Ms. Karpinski thought Ms. Newman had good qualifications and would possibly be a good addition. She noted that her investment experience was geared more towards individuals while Mr. Sullivan was more experienced with investments of a larger scale. She also noted that she was pleased that the Board was able to attract a candidate with Ms. Newman's qualifications.

After a brief discussion, on a motion made by Ms. LaRose and seconded by Mr. Lyons, the Board voted by roll-call vote (3-1) to reappoint Mr. Sullivan to the Board as its 5th member for a three-year term commencing February 5, 2018 as follows: Ms. Karpinski: Yes, Ms. LaRose: Yes, Mr. Lyons: Yes, Ms. Wright: No.

The administrator will notify the candidates of the results.

Adjournment

On a motion made by Ms. Wright and seconded by Mr. Lyons the Board voted unanimously by roll-call vote (4-0) to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 p.m. as follows: Ms. Karpinski: Yes, Ms. LaRose: Yes, Mr. Lyons: Yes, Ms. Wright: Yes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Retirement Administrator

**THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED BY THE RETIREMENT BOARD ON
12/19/2017**

APPROVED:

_____ **Joyce Karpinski, Chairperson**

_____ **Shirley LaRose**

_____ **Michael J Lyons**

_____ **Susan Wright**